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SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1897.

THE SCIENCE OF HUMANITY.*

I.

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HUMANITY is a favorite theme of poet and philosopher, novelist and historian, dramatist and moralist. The changes rung on the theme run the entire gamut of human feeling and thinking; its burden is caught in song and story and crystallized in books, and no sweeter strains have ever been sung, no grander scenes enacted, no nobler lines penned, than those fertilized by the touch of human (and solely human) nature that makes the whole world kin.

The chief subject of thought among all races is humanity in some of its numberless aspects; the chief part of the literature of civilized nations relates to humanity; the chief activities of all men are inspired by humanity. Yet—and this is a modern marvel—for the greater part the thought is vague, the literature random, the activity unorganized; *i. e.*, this most important of all subjects-matter and objects-matter in human ken has hardly been brought into the domain of that definite knowledge called science. It is meet to inquire why this is so; and, to the end that the inquiry may be answered clearly, it is needful first to define humanity and then to consider what knowledge is and the way in which science has come to be; later the half-formed science

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*Vice-Presidential address before Section H of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, delivered at Detroit, August 9, 1897.